

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY ARA:NC:TWS ON ANDRES:ABH

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, PFOR, OCON, VE

SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEETING

WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS

REF: CARACAS 12560

1. DELEGATION FROM VENEZUELAN-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, AND COUNCIL OF THE AMERICAS MET WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS AND OTHER ARA PERSONNEL THURSDAY MORNING, JANUARY 9, TO EXPRESS THEIR SERIOUS CONCERN OVER REPERCUSSIONS IN VENEZUELA FROM US TRADE ACT AND LACK HIGH LEVEL USG PRESENCE AT FLETCHER SCHOOL SYMPOSIUM.

2. WILLIAM RHODES, VENEZUELAN-AMERICAN CHAMBER PRESIDENT, REPORTED THAT PRESIDENT PEREZ RECENTLY EXPRESSED TO HIM HIS CRITICISM OF SIGNING INTO LAW OF TRADE ACT AND FAILURE OF USG TO MATCH GOV MINISTERIAL LEVEL REPRESENTATION AT SYMPOSIUM. ACCORDING TO RHODES, PEREZ NOTED LONG GOV FRIENDSHIP WITH US (ALONG LINES REFTEL) AND GOV COMMITMENT TO MAINTAIN AND EVEN INCREASE PETROLEUM EXPORTS TO US IN EVENT OF NEW ARAB EMBARGO. THUS, PEREZ SAID, EACH OF THESE

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USG ACTIONS WERE QUOTE SLAP IN THE FACE UNQUOTE. OTHER

DELEGATION MEMBERS STRESSED IMPORTANCE THESE ACTIONS HAD TO GOV-USG RELATIONS, TO FUTURE US INTERESTS IN VENEZUELA, AND TO POSSIBILITY OR LIKELIHOOD OF VENEZUELAN RETALIATION.

3. ASSISTANT SECRETARY EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR PRESENTATION AND OVER-ALL EFFORT OF VISITING GROUP, EXPLAINED EXECUTIVE BRANCH OPPOSITION TO MANDATORY EXCLUSION OPEC COUNTRIES FROM GSP, AND REFERRED TO STATEMENTS TO THAT EFFECT BY PRESIDENT FORD AT SIGNING CEREMONY OF TRADE ACT. HOWEVER, HE EMPHASIZED OVERALL SUBSTANTIAL BENEFITS WHICH ACT ENTAILS FOR DEVELOPING NATIONS AND WORLD TRADE AND POINTED OUT THAT GSP EXCLUSION WOULD NOT IMMEDIATELY AFFECT VENEZUELA IN ANY SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC DEGREE, POINTS EVIDENTLY IGNORED OR OVERLOOKED BY PROTESTING VENEZUELANS.

4. DELEGATION CALLED ON ROGERS AGAIN JANUARY 10 TO REPORT ON THEIR SEVERAL CONVERSATIONS AROUND WASHINGTON WITH MEMBERS OF BOTH LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BRANCHES. UPON RETURN TO VENEZUELA, GROUP EXPECTS TO BE INVITED TO REPORT TO PRESIDENT PEREZ. KISSINGER

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